The Cleveland Museum of Art

Cleveland Museum of Art Receives $10 million Gift Enabling Museum to Build on Mission and Core Principles

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Visionary gift connects the museum with the life of the community

CLEVELAND (March 3, 2014) — The Cleveland Museum of Art announces a $10 million gift by an anonymous donor that will further strengthen the hallmarks of the museum's guiding vision: scholarship, artistic excellence and community engagement. These three pillars reinforce the museum's regional and international reputation and serve as a bridge to both the neighborhood and global communities.

The generous gift has enabled the museum to establish two endowments, one to support community engagement activities and the other for interpretation of the collection. The final component of the gift helped make possible the December 2013 acquisition of the Catherine Glynn Benkaim and Ralph Benkaim Collection of Deccan and Mughal Paintings, an unparalleled private collection of 95 works from India's major Islamic courts. This noteworthy acquisition fulfilled a critical need in the collection, along with the museum's ability to engage and educate visitors of all races, religions and socio-economic backgrounds.

"This incredibly generous gift really touches upon the fundamental initiatives of the Cleveland Museum of Art," said Fred Bidwell, the Cleveland Museum of Art's interim director. "The establishment of the two endowments and the Benkaim Collection acquisition reflect the museum's mission and help to leverage this vision to optimally benefit its diverse communities. Adhering to the highest standards of excellence in scholarship, artistic excellence and community engagement, the museum can contribute to and enhance the quality of life of Northeast Ohio citizens and beyond."

The Cleveland Museum of Art recently began to strategically consider its community engagement program and elected to transition from a traditional community arts model into a more comprehensive, multi-faceted effort. This new effort was identified and defined through a special taskforce, the Community Engagement 360˚ Committee, comprised of 20 community leaders and museum leadership. The community engagement endowment established by this anonymous gift will help

advance the museum's groundbreaking new community engagement strategy and its related activities. Through this comprehensive initiative, the museum will most fully embody the concept of local and regional relevance, actively connecting the museum with the life of the community.

The establishment of the interpretation endowment invests in research, curriculum development and interpretation. This endowment gift completes the museum's efforts to match a challenge grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The endowment directly supports the museum's interpretation staff and the development of humanities-based interpretive materials that makes possible refreshed gallery interpretation, program modification and technology updates that enhance the visitor experience. Through interpretive tools like interactive technology and in-gallery interpreters, visitors can connect with the varying perspectives on works of art and their cultural histories.

The Benkaim Collection, which immediately elevates the museum to a world-class leader in Deccan and Mughal Paintings, was made possible by part of the gift. The Benkaim Collection contains rare folios and has been represented in many publications. Christian subjects are represented along with Hindu and Muslim themes; the collection of works offers an opportunity to encourage tolerance and respect for differing ideas and beliefs, reflecting some of the museum's highest aspirations. Thoughtfully and selectively building the permanent collection allows unparalleled opportunities for the museum's diverse community to enjoy and learn.

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About the Cleveland Museum of Art

The Cleveland Museum of Art is renowned for the quality and breadth of its collection, which includes more than 63,000 artworks and spans 6,000 years of achievement in the arts. The museum is a significant international forum for exhibitions, scholarship and performing arts and is a leader in digital innovations. One of the top comprehensive art museums in the nation, recognized for its award-winning Open Access program and free of charge to all, the Cleveland Museum of Art is located in the University Circle neighborhood.

The museum is supported in part by residents of Cuyahoga County through a public grant from Cuyahoga Arts & Culture and made possible in part by the Ohio Arts Council (OAC), which receives support from the State of Ohio and the National Endowment for the Arts. The OAC is a state agency that funds and supports quality arts experiences to strengthen Ohio communities culturally, educationally and economically. For more information about the museum and its holdings, programs and events, call 888-CMA-0033 or visit cma.org [1].

Press Announcements [2]

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Links

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